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3. She never drew the knife with blacking around the edge of her eyelids,
And never raised her hand to threaten the neighbors.
4. I swear to Allâh, oath upon oath I swear,
As well as by the life of him who spurred her,
5. That as soon as she saw me wrathful she tried to appease me
As a kind mother tries to soothe her boy.
6. She came to me as a gift, not in exchange for animals of value,
She was the boast of the kin, for all who came praised her.
7. O 'Aḳâb! that bliss of mine! thou hast buried her in Nimrin
By the impassable crags, O 'Aḳâb! opposite the water.
8. Five of my sons died, O 'Aḳâb! five, and my two brothers,
And none can say that my eyes had a sleepless night.
9. No one with grief filled me, O 'Aḳâb! except the one who dwells—who knows where?
And whose body was scented with the fragrance of *ḫzêra*.
10. Never did my heart prove faithless to my love, nor my eyes,
And whenever she whispered, my eye was as if with ophthalmia struck.
11. No matter if in two long rows come the Bedouins' daughters, O 'Aḳâb,
Thou little brother of mine! I would take none but Wazha alone.

The poet was Nimr eben 'Adwân from al-Belḳa'; the reciter, Mincîl al-Ḳaṭ'i.

Verse 1. *Jâ sîn* (or *jâ ḥejf*). Ah me! 3. A *ruṭrâf* is a mil, or small knife for rubbing on the eye black. 4. A married woman is often likened to a saddled mare and her husband during sexual intercourse to a rider. 6. Among the 'Adwân a fixed number of she-camels, sheep, or mares must be given in compensation to the father of the girl whom a man wishes to marry. This custom is known as *sijâḥ*. 7. Nimrin is the name of a small creek in al-Belḳa, where lies the burying ground of the 'Adwân. 9. *Ḫzêra* is a plant which emits a strong smell.

The Rwala usually have only one woman in a tent, seldom
595 two, and very rarely three. A young Rwejli almost always
593 marries a girl whom he loves, and remains faithful to his
837 young wife till the sixth or seventh month of her pregnancy. Then his love cools and in many cases he begins to look for another girl or divorced woman whom he also marries, unless he is setting out on a raid. If the latter is of several weeks' duration and he comes back exhausted, he desires no new marriage and waits for his wife's confinement. If she bears a boy, the young father is so happy that he clings to her again and banishes the thought of all others from his mind. If the wife behaves with sense, keeps the tent in order, can cook cleanly, is not strongheaded and quarrelsome, the husband often remains faithful to her all his life.

## PLURALITY OF WIVES

595 In case a husband is not fully satisfied with his first wife, he generally takes a second one. The first wife in the beginning is much displeased with her new companion or neighbor—*ǧârti*, as she calls her—and abuses her to the best of her ability. "Why didst thou come to me? Couldst thou find no one but my man? O thou daughter of So and So! O thou cursed in both thy parents! *Lêh ǧîtini mâ lažejti ŗejr ǧowzi enti jâ bint flân jâ mal'ûnet wâlidejn.*" However, the resistance put up by the first wife is, as a rule, not of long duration. In a comparatively short time peace is concluded by the women and they live together like sisters.

When a man has two wives, each cooks for him a day in turn, and on that day he usually eats and sleeps with her. Such is the woman's right, *ḥakkaha*, which nobody is allowed to violate. If he sees that his wife is dissatisfied, the man asks: "What art thou angry about? I have not infringed thy right. *Lêh tar'alîn mâ-ḫtejt 'alejč beḥakkeč.*" Even when he
595 does not love his wife, the man should devote himself to her
833 on the nights belonging to her. He need not have sexual intercourse with her, but neither must he with the woman he loves. In such cases he usually sleeps in the men's compartment, or lying down at his wife's head he says: "To night I wish for nothing, *mâ-ni bâŗi hal-lejle*," and the woman dares not say a word. Sometimes the women haggle among themselves: "Let me have the man tonight!" "What wilt thou give me for it?" If they come to an agreement, the woman who

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has the right of sleeping with the man that night, *dowrah*, says to him: "I grant thee furlough, now go to thy wife over there! *ana msâmḥatk erŝed 'enda maratk hunâk.*" But should the man infringe the right of one of his wives and spend several nights with the other, the deceived woman may rage as much as she will, but it will not do her any good, especially if her husband has paid to her kin the price asked for her. If a near relative of the woman dies, the man may and even should have intercourse with her for several nights, to comfort her in this way at least. During her monthly period, *'alejha-l-ḥejż*, the man must not touch the woman for from three to five days, and not for forty days after the birth of a child. During the monthly period the woman cooks and eats with the others as usual. If a man wants to beget a boy, he must have intercourse with a woman on the night of Thursday to Friday, *ǧâma'aha lejlt el-ǧum'a*, as the name of Friday, *ǧum'a*, recalls sexual intercourse, *ǧemâ'*.

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### TREATMENT AND DUTIES OF WOMEN

The rôle of the woman is to bear and bring up children, to prepare the meals, to sew, and to pitch, strike, and load the tents, *teḥajjeṭ, tebni, tarmi, tešil al-bejt*; also to load up the entire outfit of the tent, to collect the camel's hair and weave from it the bags and various saddle ornaments, *tenṭa'*, to procure water, *trâwi*, to gather fuel, *tehaṭṭeb*, to go out to buy wheat and barley, *tesfer*, and to supply the mare with fresh *šiḥ* and *naṣi, tešajjeḥ w-tehuŝŝ lal-faras*, etc.

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The man who loves his wife helps her in all these labors. He never lets her pitch, strike, or load up the tent alone, but along with his herdsman, servants, and sons always aids her. The camels carrying the supplies are guarded on the march by a servant or slave, the master or his son once in a while coming to see whether any of the pack camels needs help. Hauling water from a distant well is likewise usually the work of the son, servant, or herdsman; the master himself in this case drives out the herd to the pasture. A careful husband often loads two or three camels with fuel, especially dry branches and small stumps of *raṣa* or *arṭa* — all this to save his beloved wife labor. Even the grass and hay is brought in by the sons and servants.

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About four years before my stay with the Rwala, a young Rwala chief fell in love with a beautiful young girl. The chief was already married and father of two boys, whom his healthy young wife had borne to him. Driven by jealousy, she went to a witch, *saḥḥâra*, complained of her husband, and begged the witch to prevent his taking a second wife but not to harm him. The witch asked her to bring a piece of the wool of a sheep killed on the day of her husband's new wedding and dip it into the blood of the sheep. At that time the Rwala were camping east of Damascus, where they could buy a sheep for their supper. The young wife promised to do as she was asked. When the sheep was killed before the chief's tent a little after noon, she tore out a bit of wool as if by accident, dipped it into the blood, and gave it to the Ṣlubijje. The witch pressed the wool with both her hands, mumbled strange words, and then returned it to the wife with instructions to take good care of it, to press it thoroughly, *temûṣah*, every Friday night, and to continue doing so until the new wife was divorced by her husband. Cheered by this advice, the young wife gave a suitable reward to the Ṣlubijje, who was camping with some families of her kin on the outskirts of the Rwala encampment, and returned to her tent. At the side of this a small tent was already being put up, shut in from all sides, into which the young chief meant to bring his new bride after the wedding ceremony. This took place in the evening, the young couple entering the tent immediately afterwards. After midnight the chief returned to the big tent. All the next week his mien was dark, and the new wife did not show herself at all. After two weeks he gave her a severe beating and before the month was out divorced her because she scoffed at him in public and said that he was incapable of having intercourse with a woman; and as matter of fact she returned to her parents a virgin. The witch had caused the man to become impotent at the very moment when he approached the second woman, but reinvigorated him on his return to his first wife.

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### THE EVIL EYE

The evil eye is universally feared among the Rwala. Every Rweṣli knows that there are persons of either sex who can cast a spell over him, yet he is never able to say who it was

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*nâmha killaha w-min nâm kill al-lejl haḏâk habîl.*" Sleep during the hot midday, *ḳajjalna*, or at sunrise, *ṣaffarna*, is preferred to the night sleep. This is also the time when the animals are allowed to rest. 513

Women and girls are in constant danger from the male spirits. If a girl, especially a pretty one, falls asleep in a locality inhabited by the spirits, she is approached by a male spirit, who has sexual intercourse with her yet without violating her virginity. Should he succeed in that only once, the girl cannot resist him ever afterwards. He compels her to leave her tent at night and to come to a place selected by him. Such a woman or girl must not marry; should she do so voluntarily the spirit would torment her still more, and if she is compelled to marry the spirit would attack her husband. 776 833

Me'zel eben 'Eḳla' of the Mwâhîb married a pretty widow, a relative of his, who was dominated by a *ǧânn* and was therefore unwilling. When on the wedding night he approached her, the *ǧânn* seized him by the throat, throttled him, and then threw him out of the tent, threatening him with death should he dare to approach her again. Such a husband expelled by a spirit is called *menḥi*. But a spirit can never beget children by a woman, as spirits never have any children at all.

The wells of the watering place of Line are very deep, hewn in the rock spirally, and have smooth walls. According to a Bedouin tale, a chief's pretty daughter was often molested at night by a *ǧânn*. When she complained to her father he lay in wait for the spirit and finally caught him on the night of *as-sarra*, or of the dark of the moon. The chief tied the *ǧânn* both hands and feet, seated him on the rocky plain of Line, and commanded him to keep on circling around until his posteriors should dig a well with spring water in the rock. The *ǧânn* began to do as he was bidden, his back grinding out the rock and his head pressing up the sand, which was changed by his sweat into a thin dough. Yet no sooner had he deepened one well that the chief made him dig a second, a third, and so on, urging him on with the words: "Soften the rock, soften the rock, and change it into dough! *lîni lineh w-erdik 'aǧine.*"

Not long ago some travelers, *rab' aṭ-ṭrûš*, rode by the impassable crags of al-'Afâjef in the deep depression of al-Ka'ara. Below a hillside there a hedgehog, *ḳunfuḏ*, of extraordinary size was warming himself in the rays of the sun. 776 825

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4. If I risk my vigor and that of my old she-camel,
Then, faith, I have not much in the world that I should
Hey! glory! mourn.

Verse 1. *Maẓẓa'* means, properly, the spot where sexual intercourse takes place. 2. The *ḥamûle* is larger than the *ahl*, and is almost like the *žebûle* (see above, p. 47). 3. *Debâjel*: ulcers or abscesses. Such growths in the stomach make eating unpleasant and interfere with digestion. The fear of thieves and assailants robs a man of his appetite and the pleasant sensation of digestion.

*Já má ḳaṭa'na dûnehen min zerâže*
*tarmi beha ferž al-ǧwâ..i 'ejâlaha*
*wa' háj . . .*

Oh, how many plains vast and scorched we had to cross
before we captured them,
Where even a stray gazelle which suffers not from
Hey! glory! thirst will miscarry.

*Zerâže* are vast, waterless plains. *Ǧwâzi* are gazelles which never taste water. *Ferž* means an animal which has become separated from the herd, has gone astray. Such a one will loose the fruit of its womb from exhaustion.

### *The Raiders' Home-coming*

Once in the camp every man makes straight for his tent, driving or leading his booty. From behind the tents the women and girls watch them greeting their friends as they pass:

"Strength to thee! *ḳaw flân.*" Answer:

"O greeting to thee! *já hala.*"

"O Allâh, grant him life!" Answer:

"May Allâh grant life to thy dear ones!"

"This booty be thy consolation, *ṭalaḳ hal-fowd.*" Answer:

"For thy consolation, and mayst thou capture still more! *ṭalaḳ wa-tfid.*"

Sometimes the raider is asked for a gift with these words: "Prove that thou esteemest me! *al-ḥazijje.*" If he answers: "Rejoice over this gift, *beš behal-'aṭijje,*" the suppliant may be sure of receiving something.

Their relatives invite the raiders to stop for a meal with them. "Have it good for once, have it good, ye booty getters!